

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

Before addressing the issues raised in the present Office Action, applicants have updated the information appearing at Page 1, lines 26-33 of the instant application by inserting the U.S. Patent No. for U.S. Serial No. 09/361,396 therein; the other cited application, U.S. Serial No. 09/360,738, has not yet issued.

Applicants also acknowledge, with thanks, the Examiner's remarks that Claims 1-6, 16, 20-23 and 49-66 are allowable. Applicants observe that Claims 7-15, 17-19, 24-39, and 40-48 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the objections or rejections raised in the present Office Action.

In the present Office Action, Claims 7-15 and 30-38 are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as allegedly being of improper dependent form for failing to limit the subject matter of a previous claim. It is the Examiner's position that for Claims 7, 10, 13, 30, 33 and 36, defining the distances V_{cc} , V_{ee} , and AB without numerical values does not further limit the parent Claims 1 and 24.

In response thereto, applicants have amended the claims as suggested by the Examiner in the present Office Action. Specifically, applicants have included the features of Claim 7 into Claim 8; the features of Claim 10 into Claim 11; the features of Claims 13 into Claim 14; the features of Claim 30 into Claim 31; the features of Claim 33 into Claim 34 and the features of Claim 36 into Claim 37. In view of these amendments, Claims 7, 10, 13, 30, 33 and 36 have been cancelled.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments to Claims 8, 11, 14, 31, 34 and 37 and the cancellation of Claims 7, 10, 13, 30 and 36 obviate the objection under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c); therefore applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the instant objection.

Claims 24-48 are objected to because of the following informality: for Claim 24, the phrase “An interconnect structures” does not agree in number. In response thereto, applicants have amended Claim 24, line 1 by deleting the “s” at the end of the word “structures”. Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendment to Claim 24 obviates the formal ground of objection raised under item 2 of the present Office Action; therefore applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the instant objection.

Claim 15 stands rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for AB distances of 1-10 nm, does not reasonable provide enablement for AB distances of 2-50 nm. In response thereto, applicants have amended Claim 15 by changing the upper limit of the AB distance from “50 nm” to “5 nm”. Support for this amendment to Claim 15 is found at Page 8, lines 27-29 of the specification of the instant application.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendment to Claim 15 obviates the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; therefore applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the enablement rejection.

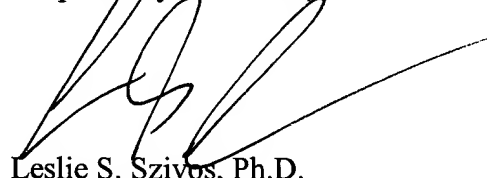
Claims 17-19 and 40-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. In particular, for Claims 17-19 and

40-42, the term "said low-k dielectric binder" lacks antecedent basis in parent Claims 1 and 24. In response thereto, applicants have cancelled Claims 17 and 40, and have amended Claims 18, 19, 41 and 42 by changing the term "low-k dielectric binder" to "dielectric material". The newly added term has antecedent basis in original patent Claims 1 and 24. See also Page 7, line 21-Page 8, line 6 for further support for the newly added term.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendment to Claims 18, 18, 41 and 42 and the cancellation of Claims 17 and 40 obviate the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; therefore applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection.

Thus, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is firmly believed that the present case is in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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